

THE

# HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

February 2009

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The February luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, February 19, 2009, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The speaker will be attorney Marcie Baria, who will discuss the Live Oak Alliance (LOAM), Growing Hancock County Green. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. Please call **by noon on Wednesday, February 18**, to assure your reservation and to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-five people. The price of the lunch is \$8.00.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

It's time to send in your membership dues for 2009. If you are unsure about whether your fees are due, check the date on your address label. This date is your expiration date. Prices are fifteen dollars (\$15) for an individual and twenty-five (\$25) for a household.

Thank you to all members who have sent in your dues. If you have sent them in and the date on the label has not been changed, please call the society at 467-4090 so that we can correct our mistake.



The Clifton Hotel (formerly Waverly Cottage) at 214 South Beach Blvd. as it appeared in the 1894 publication *Along the Gulf*

## The Clifton Hotel

Edited by  
Eddie Coleman

In 1894 a group of tourists traveled by rail along the Gulf of Mexico from New Orleans, LA, to Mobile, AL. They visited the cities of Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Mississippi City, Handsboro, Biloxi, Ocean Springs, Scranton, Pascagoula, Moss Point, and Mobile. A travelogue of their experiences in these cities as well as photographs of various sites of interest to them was published under the title *Along the Gulf*. The following account of the Clifton Hotel is taken directly from this book.

"Near the Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church is one of the prettiest little hotels on the coast, the 'Clifton House' which is now being run under the management of Miss M. C. Markey, a bright and intelligent Southern woman, who for many years was at the head of that celebrated academy of learning, situated on Esplanade Avenue in the City of New Orleans, and known as the Markey-Picard Institute. Miss Markey has devoted an ordinary lifetime to the duties of the class-room; and wishing to vary the monotony of her situation, which although pleasant and congenial in itself, was nevertheless tiresome and fatiguing on account of the manifold duties devolving upon her, she determined to dispose of her interest in the school



## THE

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10:00AM — 3:00PM  
Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)**MISSION STATEMENT**

“TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION.”

and enter a new field of adventure. Accordingly her brother, Mr. John F. Markey, a prominent citizen of New Orleans, purchased this piece of property at the “Bay” and installed her as manager of the [hotel], which she will no doubt fill to the credit of herself, and the satisfaction of all who may take up their [abode] under her hospitable roof.

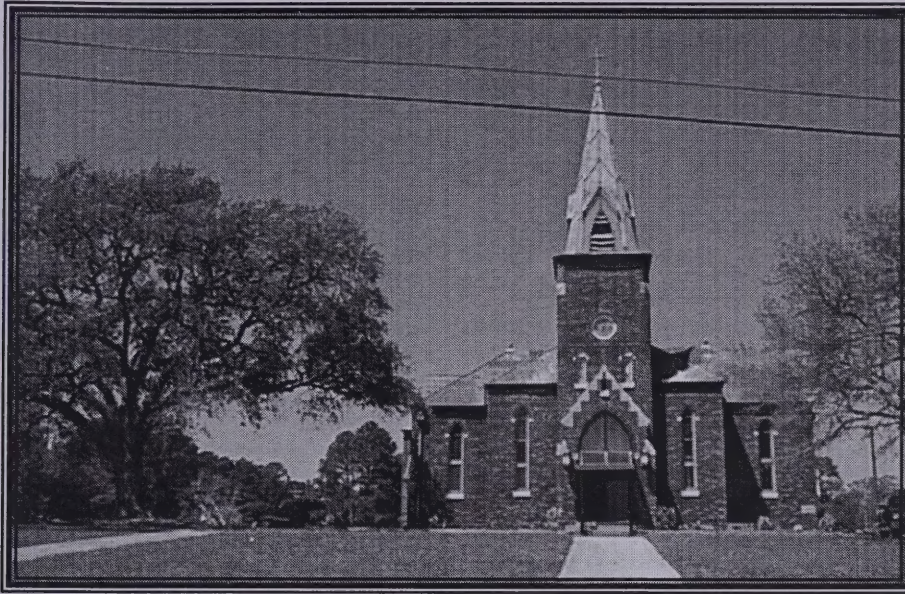
“The Clifton House is situated on the beach at Bay St. Louis, within a stone’s throw of the ‘[long] bridge’ and a few minutes walk from the depot. It contains 14 rooms in the main building besides other accommodations in out buildings, etc. The architecture of the place, as may be seen from the photograph which is herein reproduced [p. 1] is of that quaint old Creole style so noticeable in many portions of the French Quarter of New Orleans and consists of a raised cottage and attic, with large halls running through the entire length of the building. The house stands about fifty feet back from the beach road [South Beach Blvd.] with a beauti-

ful lawn in front, and shaded on the sides by large and elegant trees. A nicely paved walk, margined with flowers and shrubbery of all kinds, leads from the front gate to a wide veranda which extends along the entire front of the building; from this gallery you enter a 12 foot hall running through the house, on either side of which are situated large and commodious bed rooms. At the end of the hall another flight of stairs leads to the upper story, which contains large and airy sleeping apartments with their picturesque dormer windows looking out upon the broad and expansive waters of the ‘Bay.’ In the lower portion or basement is the dining hall, which occupies one side of the basement, the opposite side being taken up with four of the neatest and coziest bed rooms that any one could wish to occupy. The dining room is separated from the surrounding lawn by frames of lattice work, which render the place delightfully cool and pleasant. The house is indeed an ideal summer home, as every room is provided



The Clifton Hotel after the north and south wing additions c. 1905





St. Clare Catholic Church (pre-Katrina)  
Waveland, Mississippi

## St. Clare Catholic Church

By  
Scott Bagley

with sufficient openings to admit the invigorating winds from the Gulf in front, or the odor laden breeze from the pine forests in the rear, yet withal it is a comfortable and compact winter resort, as the building is provided with heaters, which give to the place a glow and warmth sufficient to leave our winter visitors under the impression that they are enjoying spring weather on the borders of the Gulf of Mexico. The place is supplied with an extensive smokeless gas machine, and there is gas in every room in the house. There is a large orchard on the place, plentifully stocked with fruit trees; and oranges, pears, peaches, figs and grapes of many varieties may be gathered in abundance. Miss Markey has her own cows, and therefore pure milk, cream cheese and fresh butter can be had at all times. The table is always supplied with the best the market affords, and the terms are reasonable and within the means of all."

The Clifton House Hotel was lost in the 1907 fire which also burned thirty other buildings including the Osioinach Opera House, Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church, and St. Joseph Academy.

We continue this month with our series of articles about historic churches in Hancock County. This month we turn our attention to a church in Waveland where St. Clare Catholic Church at 236 South Beach Boulevard has long been an important part of the coastal community.

While St. Clare did not become a parish until 1919, its presence in the community goes back to the nineteenth century. Prior to the establishment of the parish of St. Clare, Waveland's Catholic community was served by Our Lady of the Gulf parish in Bay St. Louis, whose pastor Father Louis Buteaux offered an occasional weekday mass in a Waveland home. In 1882 Bishop Francis Janssens of the Diocese of Natchez dedicated a small mission church on some Waveland beach property donated for this purpose. The church was built primarily by way

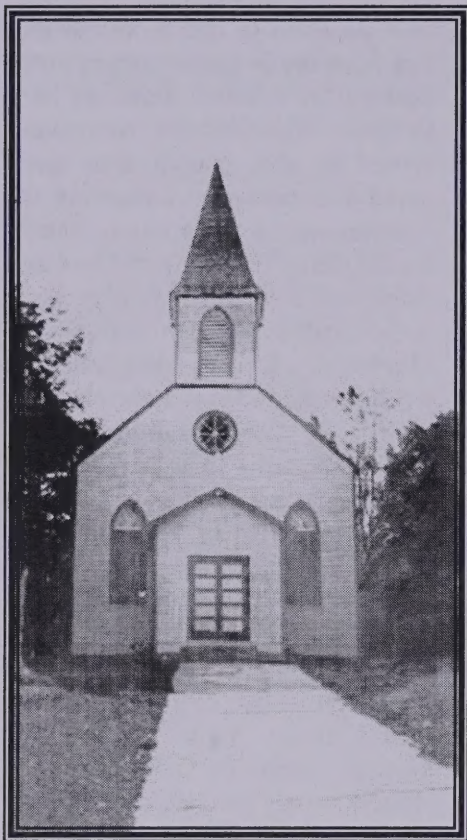
of a donation of one thousand dollars from Emile Carriere, then president of the Citizens Bank of New Orleans. The Catholic community served by this church then numbered 175 persons. Following the construction of the mission church, Father Henry LeDuc from Our Lady celebrated a monthly Sunday Mass in the small church. In 1898, Father Florimond Blanc established a weekly Sunday Mass at the church.

In 1905, additional construction on the church practically doubled its size. When St. Clare became a parish in 1919, the Rev. M. J. Costello was appointed its first pastor. Along with the establishment of the parish came an increase in summer visitors to Waveland from New Orleans, most of them Catholic. With the help of the diocese, grounds adjoining the church were purchased from the Jesuit Fathers, and a rectory was built thereon with borrowed funds. The church itself was again enlarged in 1938. In 1957, Father Costello oversaw the addition of a bell tower and a brick front wall.

In 1962, Father John O'Brien succeeded Father Costello, and under his leadership a new brick church was built as well as a parochial school and a two story residence for the teaching sisters of the Dominican Nuns of the Congregation of St. Mary, New Orleans. The St. Clare school opened its doors with the beginning of the 1964 school year. Under the pastorate of Father Kevin Bambrick and its founding principal, Sister Ruth Angelette, O. P., a kindergarten and the first five grades were organized. Each year thereafter a succeeding grade was added until all eight grades were complete—total enrollment exceeding three hundred students.

In 1968, Father Patrick Hannelly began a brief pastorate at





St. Clare  
Catholic Church  
in 1912

St. Clare to be succeeded in 1969 by Father Walter Maloney. It was in this same year that Hurricane Camille struck severely damaging the church and destroying the school, convent, parish hall, and rectory. Amazingly, before the first anniversary of Camille, all parish buildings, with the exception of the rectory, had been rebuilt or restored including the school. While a new rectory would not be built on the property for another fifteen to twenty years, pastors during this interim were housed in a house purchased by the church on Vacation Lane. By 1971, the parish was serving approximately two thousand members.

The parish, including its school, continued to thrive for over thirty years until, on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed

all of the parish buildings. As with the aftermath of Hurricane Camille, the parish of St. Clare looked forward and quickly set up temporary facilities on the property for both church and school. With the generous donation of a number of large tents from a business in Alaska, the parish was able to hold regular mass, and the school was able to operate within a month after the storm. However, with the loss of so many parishioners because of housing destruction, school enrollment dropped dramatically, and the difficult decision was made to close the school in 2006 and merge with Holy Trinity Catholic School in Bay St. Louis.

As St. Clare readies to enter the next chapter of its history, the future is very bright. Construction will begin soon on a new church and multi-purpose hall. Both buildings will allow this parish, under the current pastorate of Father "Cuddy" O'Connell, to continue its tradition of providing strong and supportive spiritual support on the Gulf Coast.

#### SOURCES:

*Sea Coast Echo* (Heritage Edition)  
29 May 1977, p. 7-D.

*Catholicity in Mississippi* (unknown publisher) 1937, p. 313.

(The author wishes to thank Beverly Zimmerman, Noel Phillips, and Kathy Scott of St. Clare parish for their gracious help with this article.)



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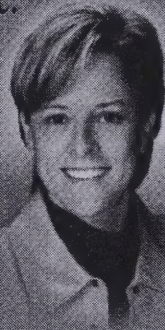
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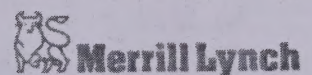
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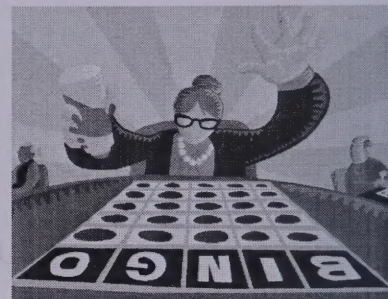




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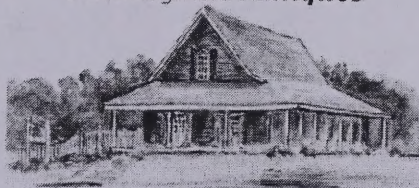
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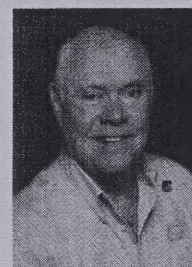
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